

*Newsletter for friends of
Coatesville VA Medical Center*

December 2009

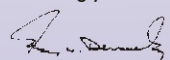
Director's Message

Proud American men and women are serving and sacrificing for freedom around the world as America's military defends us against terrorism. All who are privileged to live in this Nation have a special place in our hearts for these defenders of freedom. Please join me in keeping these heroes in your thoughts as they are separated from their families during this holiday season.

Many of these heroes receive care at Coatesville Veterans Affairs Medical Center (CVAMC). On behalf of every employee, I can say we are truly honored and privileged to care for our Nation's Veterans every day. We strive to provide the highest quality healthcare possible, and we appreciate the help of volunteers. We sincerely thank all of the volunteers who devote themselves to the worthy mission of helping Veterans.

The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq bring with them Veterans with different needs than in times past, and so we welcome the hearts and hands of a new generation of volunteers. We invite citizens young and old to join us in honoring Veterans by learning more about VA's volunteer program. If you are interested in serving those who serve us, please stop by our Voluntary Service Office in Building 5 or call 610-383-0228.

Wishing you and yours a very happy holiday season,



Gary W. Devansky, Director

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Veterans Week Celebrations

From November 3rd through November 11th, Coatesville VAMC celebrated Veterans Week. It started with the Women Veterans Luncheon on Tuesday, November 3rd, where recently appointed Associate Director Robin Aube-Warren delivered an inspiring keynote speech to a crowded room.

The annual Veterans Banquet took place on Thursday, November 5th, in the evening. Everyone in attendance enjoyed a great evening that featured entertainment by the Tiller Sisters and the Golden Tones. All in all, about 220 Veterans and 60 community members attended and 30 employee volunteers served delicious dishes including chicken cordon bleu and fish.

The highlight of the week was the parade. Taking place on Friday, November 6th this year, it was extra special. Leading the procession were 22 World War II Veterans serving as Grand Marshals on an amphibious "Ride the Duck" vehicle which is based on the DUKW which was used for transportation and amphibious attacks during WWII. Many veterans service organizations participated in the parade including Disabled American Veterans, Chapter 90; Sons of the American Revolution; Knights of Columbus, 4th degree; Vietnam Veterans of America, Post 590; Department of Pennsylvania Ladies Auxiliary; Military Order of the Purple Heart; Korean War Veterans, Chapter 114; Order of the Eastern Star; and Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 106. Many other organizations and businesses, high school marching bands, local fire and police departments and even the Turkey Hill Cow were part of the celebration. State Representative Tim Hennessey and many veterans services organizations participated in the flag ceremony that followed the parade. Each WWII Veteran was personally thanked and recognized in front of the crowd. It was a great end to a great day.

On Tuesday, November 10th, for the first time ever, a formal luncheon was held for the Community Living Center residents. The dining room was decorated in red, white and blue and looked like an elegant ball room. Residents and their families enjoyed music by the Fred Hall Orchestra and crab cakes and lasagna served by employee volunteers.

Other events included a gospel concert, karaoke party, variety show, interfaith service, the 5K Freedom Run, and two salutes to Veterans on Veterans Day, November 11th. When asked how the week could be improved, a Veteran put it best by saying, "I would air it on news stations worldwide so everyone around the globe could share in the events. Thank you very much!! Job well done!!!"

Thank you to everyone involved for showing Veterans again this year how much their sacrifices are appreciated. And, special thanks to the committee who put in a lot of hard work to make these events as special as possible.



Holiday Events

Sunday, December 13

Hannukah Celebration

2pm, Great Hall, Building 5

Sponsored by the Jewish War Veterans Auxiliary, Dept. of PA

Tuesday, December 15

Christmas Concert

6pm, Great Hall, Building 5

Performance by Unified

Saturday, December 19

Christmas Concert

6:30pm, Great Hall,

Building 5

Performance by the

Tiller Sisters

Tuesday, December 22

All Faith Chapel Holiday

Open House

12:45pm, All Faith Chapel,

Building 72

Performance by the

Meistersingers

VCS Coffee Shop Offers Much More than Coffee



The VCS Coffee Shop, run by the Veterans Canteen Service, officially opened for business on November 2, 2009. Coffee Shop management, who also run the VCS Retail Store and Food Court, are excited by the additional opportunity to serve Veterans, volunteers, visitors and employees. The VCS Coffee Shop is open Monday through Friday from 6:30am until 4pm and Saturdays from 9am through 2pm.

In addition to Starbucks® brand coffee, the VCS Coffee Shop offers cappuccino, lattes, mochas and many cold drinks like green tea, smoothies, bottled frappuccino and juices. Also offered are top-of-the-line muffins, pastries, cakes, salads and sandwiches. Management plans to upgrade as they go along, constantly adding new products and keeping things fresh. Since the Food Court is closed on Saturdays, hot foods like chili and soup are available. Breakfast sandwiches will soon join the daily menu.

The process of putting all of the pieces together to build the VCS Coffee Shop could not have gone any better. Says Manager Barbara Johnson, "I was so impressed with CVAMC Facilities Engineering Service staff. Their willingness to work hard, deal with issues that arose, and build the best coffee shop possible was appreciated. Thanks to all who were involved!"

Future plans include the installation of three internet-accessible computers. All members of the local community are invited to shop at the VCS Retail Store and dine at the VCS Food Court and VCS Coffee Shop. All items are sold tax free and no special identification or affiliation is required to make a purchase.

CVAMC Recognized in National Creative Arts Festival

In October, Jay Smith, a CVAMC patient, was invited to attend the National Creative Arts Festival in San Antonio, Texas as a finalist for his cross stitch titled "Gettysburg". His first place win in CVAMC's local festival made him eligible for this honor. He was elated to then learn his entry had also won the national competition in the cross stitch category.

The week was filled with art instruction, cultural events, tours, and a viewing of select entries in the Performing Arts categories. Jay said on more than one occasion that this was the "trip of a lifetime"! For Jay, cross stitch is a hobby that provides him with healing. He never thought he'd win among all the entries in the Nation! Let Jay's journey be an inspiration to us all. Art can be



Jenn Koehler
Supervisor, Recreation Therapy

more than a hobby; it can provide healing and open new doors that one may not have expected.

CVAMC Employees Give Back

Many CVAMC employees are grateful for their many blessings. It is the time of year for giving, so members of the Materiel Management Service came together to do something nice for a special Veteran. On Monday, December 7th, the team presented Matthew Krepps and his daughter, Skyler, with a holiday basket filled to the brim with goodies. In it was a big turkey, dinner rolls, vegetables everything a family needs for a holiday celebration. It was so full and heavy, they had to bring the car around rather than carry it out.

The basket was really an adult gift, but Skyler didn't leave empty-handed. She was presented with a gift bag of her own and one to take home to her younger brother. Everyone that participated walked away with a good feeling that day.



Enrollment and Eligibility

You can inquire about your eligibility and enroll for benefits by visiting building 2, room B10A.

You can also call 610-384-7711, extensions 5034 or 5008 if you have questions. Some of our clinics have evening hours on Wednesdays.



HILLTOPICS

Hilltopics is published quarterly for friends of Coatesville VA Medical Center. Please address suggestions, comments or story ideas to: Kathleen Pomorski, extension 4203 or kathleen.pomorski@va.gov. The editor reserves the right to make changes and/or edits. Layout/design/photography provided by CVAMC Medical Media Service.